

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR MARR NATO IC

SUBJECT: PRESS INTERVIEW OF ICELANDIC FOREIGN MINISTER ON
DEFENSE MATTERS

1. THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER EINAR AGUSTSSON
ON DEFENSE MATTERS APPEARED IN PROGRESSIVE PARTY NEWSPAPER TIMINN
JUNE 9, 1974.

QUOTE

DURING THE HEAT OF THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN REPEATED EFFORTS
HAVE BEEN MADE TO MISINTERPRET THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY POLICY
IN DEFENSE AND SECURITY MATTERS. I THEREFORE FIND IT NECESSARY
TO EXPLAIN IT FURTHER IN VERY FEW WORDS.

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IT HAS NEVER BEEN THE INTENTION OF THE PP TO SEVER THE COOPERATION WITH WESTERN NATIONS. IT IS EVEN STIPULATED IN THE GOVERNMENT PLATFORM THAT COOPERATION WITH NATO IS TO CONTINUE. THE PP HAS ALWAYS GREATLY EMPHASIZED HAVING COOPERATION WITH THE ATLANTIC STATES AND THAT ICELAND CONTINUE TO BE A MEMBER OF NATO. IT HAS NEVER BEEN CONSIDERED TO SEVER THESE TIES.

THE SAME APPLIES TO THE BASE ISSUE. ALTHOUGH OUR POLICY IS THAT THERE BE NO ARMED FORCES STATIONED HERE IN TIMES OF PEACE, IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN OUR INTENTION TO WORK THIS OUT IN FULL COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. AND TO IMPLEMENT THIS POLICY ON A CORDIAL BASIS WITH THE AMERICANS. THIS IS HOW THE ISSUE HAS BEEN HANDLED AND THIS IS HOW THE ISSUE WILL BE HANDLED WHILE THE PP IS HANDLING IT. WE PUT MAIN EMPHASIS ON CORDIAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. AND THE ATLANTIC STATES. WE WILL, THEREFORE, WORK OUT OUR POLICY OF HAVING THE COUNTRY FREE OF TROOPS DURING PEACEFUL TIMES, IN COMPLETE FRIENDLINESS WITH THE U.S. THIS OUGHT NOT TO BE DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT, SINCE THE AMERICANS HAVE SHOWN UNDERSTANDING OF OUR VIEWS. OUR AIM IS TO ASSURE THE INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY OF ICELAND AND THE ICELANDIC NATION PRINCIPALLY BY PARTICIPATION IN NATO AND BY SECURING FOR OUR ALLIES A POSITION TO CONTINUE THEIR PATROLING IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC AND TO PROVIDE FOR QUICK DEFENSES IF PEACE BECAME INSECURE. IN PEACEFUL TIMES, HOWEVER, FOREIGN TROOPS ARE NOT TO BE STATIONED HERE.

THIS POLICY IS NEITHER THE POLICY OF THE INDEPENDENCE PARTY WHICH IS FOR PERMANENT ARMED FORCES OCCUPATION AND UNCHANGED CONDITIONS, OR THE POLICY OF THE COMMUNISTS WHICH CALLS FOR A DEFENSELESS COUNTRY: A POLICY WHICH COURTS DANGERS. OUR POLICY IS THE RESPONSIBLE, FORTUNATE, AND INDEPENDENT POLICY FOR THE ICELANDIC NATION WHICH WANTS TO KEEP ITS INDEPENDENCE AND FREEDOM, ALTHOUGH TINY, ASSURE ITS PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY OF WESTERN NATIONS, MAINTAIN ITS SECURITY BY PARTICIPATING IN NATO, PROVIDE THE AMERICANS WITH POSITIONS TO CONDUCT PATROLS FOR NATO IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC, AND MAINTAIN A DEFENSE BASE HERE FOR SECURITY REASONS WHICH MAY BE USED IF HOSTILITY SEEMED IN THE OFFING. IT IS MY CONVICTION THAT THPS POLICY IS THE ONLY WAY TO TERMINATE THE PRESENCE OF THE DEFENSE FORCE HERE, WHICH

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CALLS FOR AN ADEQUATE DEFENSE PHASE-OUT PERIOD.

PARALLEL TO THIS WE WANT TO DO EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO STIMULATE THE PEACEFUL DEVELOPMENT TAKING PLACE RECENTLY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. THEREFORE, WE PUT GREAT EMPHASIS ON POSITIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE WORK PERFORMED BY THE UN. WE ARE PLEASED ABOUT THE PEACEFUL RELATIONS OF THE BIG POWERS, I.E., THE U.S. AND THE USSR, AND THE U.S. AND CHINA. WE WILL

PARTICIPATE ACTIVELY IN THE EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE, AND WE HOPE THAT THE VIENNA CONFERENCE OCSARMS LIMITATIONS WILL BE FRUITFUL. WE ALSO CONDUCT A FRIENDLY FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS ALL STATES, ALTHOUGH THE CLOSEST RELATIONSHIP IS WITH THE NORDIC COUNTRIES AND THE ATLANTIC STATES. THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE PP HAS RESULTED IN ICELAND HAVING NO ENEMIES AMONG THE WORLD'S STATES. NO STATE THREATENS OUR SECURITY AND INDEPENDENCE. WE ENJOY GOOD TRADE AND OTHER RELATIONS WITH ALL OF OUR NEIGHBORS, BOTH WEST AND EAST OF THE ATLANTIC. END QUOTE.
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